

Minutes Human Relations Commission April 19, 2005

Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on TUESDAY, April 19, 2005, 6:00P.M., at the Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Arlene Chin
Colleen Byron
Zach Berning
Edwin Gonzalez-Santin
Hasaan Elsaad
Joseph Mann
Dr. Louis Olivas
Gail Paredes-Ewen
Linda Ritland
Janis Webb

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Joel Navarro
Safali Patel-Evans
Muhammed Zubair

City Staff Present:

Rosa Inchausti
Andrea Groves

Guests Present:

Erik Anderson
Frank Crank
Nikki Crank

Meeting convened at 6:00 P.M.

Chair Gail Paredes-Ewen called the meeting to order and invited members of the public to address the Commission.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2- Consideration of Minutes

March 9, 2005

MOTION: Commissioner Edwin Gonzalez-Santin made a motion to accept minutes.

SECOND: Commissioner Joseph Mann.

DECISION: Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3- Diversity Dialogue Wrap-up Report from Participants

Chair Gail Paredes-Ewen invited Erik Anderson and Nikki Crank, participants of the recent Diversity Dialogue program, to relate personal experiences from the program:

Nikki Crank:

- 1) Mrs. Crank is a first-time participant in the program. She is new to the Valley and joined the program to gain insight into the community.
- 2) She felt that the program is a great idea and should continue; however, she felt that the program should have a stronger agenda. The Dialogue program should not be an avenue for participants to voice negative experiences with other ethnicities. Mrs. Crank further suggested efforts should be made to get parents and educators to participate in the program.

Erik Anderson:

- 1) Mr. Anderson appreciated the loose structure of the program and the freedom for participants to determine the topic of discussion. He has known about the program for while but never participated because he felt that the Dialogue Program was too slanted toward political correctness.
- 2) Mr. Anderson suggests that the criteria for participation in the program should not be focused on race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation; instead, solicit participant's point of view on Proposition 200, Minute-Man, or Affirmative Action. This would change the mix and quality of the program.

General Discussion of the Diversity Dialogue Program included:

- The HRC thanked the participants for their experiences and suggestions on improving the program.
- One commissioner suggested that the facilitators could distribute articles about a predetermined theme for the program and tailor each session to a subtopic of the overall theme.
- Another commissioner suggested contacting the court system to get participation from those doing mandatory community service or asking the schools to send a student to participate as part of the students' service project. This would add to the mix and change the structure of the program.

Agenda Item 4 – HRC Strategic Plan Update

Chair Gail Paredes-Ewen requested updates from the following subcommittees:

A. Subcommittee for Development of Emerging Issues Report:

In Joel Navarro's absence, Chair Gail Paredes-Ewen provided an update:

1. Public Forum Discussion on Day Labor Issue

- 1) The Regional HRC Subcommittee on Day Labor met Monday, April 18, 2005 in Chandler.
- 2) The subcommittee agreed to conduct an open forum to solicit information on the day labor issue and how it is affected by Proposition 200. The City of Chandler volunteered to host the forum.
- 3) The date has been set for Thursday, June 2, 2005 from 6pm to 9pm in the City of Chandler Council Chambers. Panelists include Dr. Valenzuela, a professor at the University of Southern California, representatives from the Cesar Chavez Foundation, representatives from the successful day labor center in Panoma, California, out-of-state experts on the topic of day labor, representatives from the day labor center in Phoenix, contractors, and an actual day-laborer. The regional subcommittee would like to include representatives from Arizona State University, but they are requesting feedback from the commission on who specifically to invite.
- 4) The regional subcommittee is working out the details for a press release and other public relations efforts for this event. In the meantime, the regional subcommittee would like all participating HRCs to identify three questions they would like to have answered during the Forum.

General Discussion of the Public Forum included:

- There was some discussion on what effect current legislation would have on a city's efforts to assist a local day labor center since many think that the majority of day laborers are undocumented residents.

It was discussed at the regional subcommittee that those issues should be resolved before the Forum on June 2, 2005.

- The HRC decided that the three questions to have answered at the Forum would be: 1) How do you live with the day labor issue; 2) What is working in other cities; and 3) What challenges will Tempe have when Home Depot opens their store next to a location where day laborers already congregate?
- There was general consensus from the commission that Mayor and Council should receive a formal invitation to the Forum. Chair Gail Paredes-Ewen will draft an invitation letter. Staff will assist in getting the Forum on the official Council Calendar.

MOTION: Commissioner Zach Berning made a motion that the HRC formally invite Mayor and Council to the Public Forum on Day Labor, detailing when and where, and explain the importance of attendance.

SECOND: Commissioner Edwin Gonzalez-Santin.

DECISION: Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner and member of the subcommittee, Janis Webb, provided an update on the following topics:

2. GLBT Issue

- 1) Commissioner Webb commented on Tempe Talks: A Community Conversation program on Sexual Orientation held in May 2003. One concern discussed among the panelists had to do with equality in the workplace and in the schools. There were three areas that the panelists felt needs addressing in the schools: 1) teacher training; 2) counselor resources and 3) administrative support.
- 2) Commissioner Janis Webb will contact the panelists to determine if those issues have been addressed.

Incidentally, Commissioner Janis Webb attended April's Diversity Steering Committee held earlier today, April 19, 2005 and reported on the comments from Jamieson and Gutierrez. Specifically, the follow-up audit showed that 8% seen, heard of or experienced discrimination based on lifestyle. In response to Commissioner Webb's request for clarification, Jamieson and Gutierrez replied that this 8% refers to 8% of the population of the workforce and the term "lifestyle" is language taken from the focus groups conducted for the baseline diversity audit in 2000. Commissioner Webb met briefly with city employees who have identified themselves as being a part of the GLBT community. They expressed concerns but at this time had no specific concerns to bring to the commission.

3. Partnership with Mayor's Commission on Disability Concerns Update

- 1) Salt River Project and the Tempe Convention and Visitor's Bureau are sponsoring the creation of a handbook called "Access Tempe" that would be given to disabled visitors, residents and students of Tempe. This handbook is going to highlight Tempe's disability friendly environment in the areas of tourism, bus routes, and other types of transportation.
- 2) Commissioner Janis Webb volunteered to form a panel of residents who are disabled to review the samples and provide feedback on what they would like to see in the handbook. Commissioner Webb is not sure right now how the HRC could assist, but will keep the commission posted.

B. Subcommittee for Community Network and Outreach:

Commissioner and Chair of subcommittee, Linda Ritland, provided an update.

- 1) The subcommittee will meet Monday, April 25, 2005.
- 2) The subcommittee feels that the items needed to produce the brochure have been gathered. They are now working on the layout to make it a quality product.

2. Outreach to Asian, Indian and Islamic Communities Update

General Discussion of Outreach to Asian, Indian, and Islamic Communities included:

- Although this topic stemmed from the proposal to partner from Ms. Florence Boyle from Dayspring back in August of 2004, the commission could not remember what direction they wanted to take with this topic.
- One commissioner suggested that the individual commissioners just keep their eyes open for opportunities to highlight and recognize these specific community groups.
- Other commissioners wanted to wait until the brochure is published before doing any significant outreach.
- Another commissioner suggested that the commission take steps now to inform the community about the HRC instead of waiting for the brochure. He suggested placing a short article about the commission in Tempe's water bill.

MOTION: Commissioner Zach Berning made a motion that the HRC contact the City of Tempe Media Relations Director, Shelley Hearn, to place an article about the commission in the City's water bill insert.

SECOND: Commissioner Linda Ritland.

DECISION: Motion passed unanimously.

C. Subcommittee on Strategic Oversight:

Chair of the HRC and member of the subcommittee, Gail Paredes-Ewen, provided an update on the following topics:

1. Update on Partnership with Neighborhood Advisory Commission

No report.

2. Update on Community Conversation/Conflict Management

- 1) The topic for the next Tempe Talks: A Community Conversation will be on conflict management. The program would be designed to educate residents on how to discuss polarized issues in a respectful manner. The subcommittee sees this Community Conversation as an extension to the last Diversity Dialogue program.
- 3) Commissioners Janis Webb, Linda Ritland and Colleen Byron volunteered to work with the subcommittee on coordinating the program.

D. Supplier Diversity Ad-hoc Committee Report

There was no report. Staff commented that the Diversity and Human Relations & Resources Council Committee granted permission to proceed with developing a race-neutral supplier diversity program in Tempe.

Agenda Item 5 –Diversity Audit Discussion

Chair Gail Paredes-Ewen led discussion on the follow-up Diversity Audit:

- 1) The follow-up audit conducted by Jamieson & Gutierrez identified three departments, Police, Development Services, Information Technology and Development Services as needing improvement.
- 2) The Diversity & Human Relations and Resources Council Committee reviewed presentations from each of the three departments on their response to the follow-up diversity audit at the Council Committee meeting, March 22, 2005. Several commissioners attended that meeting and observed those presentations.

- 3) At least one commissioner attended the April 14, 2005 Issue Review Session and heard the recommendation and approval to exempt the Police Department from oversight and follow-up in the upcoming months of diversity audit reviews.

General Discussion of the Police Department (PD) Oversight included:

- One commissioner commented that PD is different from other departments in that they carry weapons. That alone, among other reasons, is cause for Council oversight.
- Another commissioner added since that the baseline audit revealed a problem in the Police Department and the follow-up audit showed that the problem still exists, it is upsetting that they are not being held accountable.
- Many commissioners feel that since the audit reflects the views of employees, it is frightening that a department could stand outside and not be held accountable for addressing the concerns of its people.
- There was a general consensus from the commission that a letter should be drafted to Mayor and Council demanding that they reconsider the decision to excuse the Police Department from follow-up.

MOTION: Commissioner Dr. Louis Olivas made a motion that the HRC send a memo to Mayor and Council requesting them to reconsider having Council oversight on the Police Department's response to the follow-up diversity audit.

SECOND: Commissioner Edwin Gonzalez-Santin.

DECISION: Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 7 –Diversity Office Update

Staff Rosa Inchausti provided an update on the following agenda items:

A. Council Committee Update

- 1) The Diversity and Human Relations & Resources Council Committee approved the request to add 'Diversity' as one of Tempe's official values. The item will be placed on an upcoming Issue Review Session for approval from the entire Tempe Council.

B. WHO'S Your Neighbor? Brown Bag Report

- 1) There were 50 community members and employees in attendance for the March 28, 2005 Brown Bag on Immigration in Tempe-Past and Present.

C. HRC Public Service Announcement

- 1) The Public Service Announcement (PSA) created by the Regional HRC Subcommittee in December 2004 is airing on Tempe Channel 11.
- 2) The PSA is 20-second video introducing the Valley's Human Relations Commissions. It also extends an invitation to get in touch with them by listing contact information.

Incidentally, the HRC requested staff to bring in a copy of the PSA to May's HRC meeting to review.

D. Neighborhood Issue Update

- 1) North Tempe Resident Reese Welch addressed the commission at their March 2005 meeting on an issue that occurred in his neighborhood. He talked about a flyer published by white supremacist organization called National Alliance left on his driveway. Mr. Welch also passed around a photo of graffiti drawn on the sign of a Korean Church across the street.
- 2) The HRC motioned to bring this to the attention of the Diversity and Human Relations & Resources Council Committee. The commission also requested staff to follow-up with the Neighborhood Programs Office. Meanwhile, the commission would contact the Korean Church and offer support.

- 3) The commission also suggested that Mr. Welch contact his neighbors and/or his neighborhood association and perhaps work with the Police Department in organizing a Block Watch.
- 4) Staff added that the Neighborhood Office is in contact with Mr. Welch.
- 5) It was discovered that the Korean Church did not file a police report.

Agenda Item 6 –Current Events Announcements

None.

The commission's next meeting will be held May 10, 2005 at Tempe City Hall

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 P.M.

Prepared by: Andrea Groves

Reviewed by: Rosa Inchausti

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Manager